

Estuaries. More Than Meets the Eye.

What is an estuary? It's where **freshwater rivers meet Puget Sound**, creating **wetland marshes with grasses, sedges, and rushes, crisscrossed by winding channels**

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

70-80% of Puget Sound's estuaries have been lost due to diking and development

HOW DO WE RESTORE ESTUARIES?

1

DIKES GET REMOVED OR SET BACK

RIVERS & TIDES WASH OVER THE LAND

SALMON MOVE IN IMMEDIATELY

2

EXISTING VEGETATION DIES BACK

NATIVE MARSH VEGETATION TAKES ITS PLACE

3

AT THE SAME TIME THE REBIRTH OF THE MARSH BEGINS...

WOODY DEBRIS AND SEDIMENT MOVE IN, CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE

TIDAL CHANNELS FORM AND GROW

4

ESTUARY RETURNS TO FORMER ABUNDANCE

We celebrate an ecosystem returned

RESTORE OUR ESTUARIES

RECOVER OUR PUGET SOUND

LEARN MORE

wdfw.wa.gov/nearshore

WHY IS AN ESTUARY IMPORTANT?

- Provides a unique, rich habitat to many species that have important cultural, commercial and recreational value
- Acts as a “nursery of the sea,” supporting vast amounts of young marine life
- Restoring and protecting estuaries helps threatened and endangered species recover

Salmon need estuaries

Research shows that when young salmon can grow in estuaries their chances of surviving to adulthood increases. Healthy estuaries provide:

- Lots of food to help them grow
- Many places to hide from predators
- Pockets of slow-moving water to rest in

Killer whales need salmon

When we help salmon — including threatened Puget Sound Chinook salmon — we help endangered Southern Resident killer whales

Puget Sound needs all of the above



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